

In reply to a question asked, Dr. Budd stated that he believed that the tongue of the second head was very rudimentary.

## MATERIA MEDICA AND PHARMACY.

6. *Effect of Belladonna in immediately arresting the Secretion of Milk.*—Dr. R. H. GEOLLEN has communicated to the *Lancet* (Aug. 9th, 1856) the two following cases, which seem to show that belladonna possesses the power of arresting the secretion of milk.

E. J., aged 28, was admitted into Anne's Ward, St. Thomas's Hospital, with severe rheumatic fever. She had been ill four days, with a child at the breast four months old. At the time of her admission she had swelling and acute pain in both wrists, right elbow, both knees, and left ankle. The knee-joints were distended with synovia, and erythematous patches were on the skin of the knees, ankles, and wrists. She was bathed in perspiration, and the secretion of milk was abundant. According to the regulation of the hospital, the child was removed; indeed, from her hopeless condition, it was necessary, considering the difficulty of attending to an infant in a ward with other patients. Soon after her admission she took eight grains of calomel and a grain and a half of opium, followed by a strong draught; and one scruple of nitrate of potassa, ten grains of bicarbonate of potassa, and half a drachm of spirit of nitric ether, in peppermint water, every four hours. The joints were covered with cotton wool.

On the following day, at two o'clock, I found she had been freely purged; the joints were in nearly the same state. She had had no sleep. The breasts had become tumid, hard, painful, knotty, and extremely tender. The superficial veins were distended. Some milk had been drawn, but the process was attended with great pain, and we could not listen to the heart's sounds on account of the tenderness.

A milk abscess, in complication with rheumatic fever, was of all things to be avoided, and unless the secretion could be at once arrested it appeared inevitable. In this strait I recollected that I had somewhere met with an observation (but I cannot remember whether it was in an English or foreign journal) that nuphar applied externally to the breasts would dry up the milk; and, thinking it reasonable, I caused the areola of the breasts to be smeared with extract of belladonna, in the same way that it is used to dilate the pupil of the eye. I likewise ordered the addition of half-drachm doses of colobium wine, knowing that whenever milch cows eat the meadow saffron in the pasture they immediately become dry; and though I have not much faith in colobium as a remedy in rheumatic fever uncomplicated with gout, there could be no objection to its use, and it has the sanction of much higher authority than my own.

On my third visit, the following day, the first inquiry was about the breasts. They were all right. But was it the colobium or belladonna that had relieved them? The extract was used before I left the ward; before the mixture was given the secretion of milk had been arrested and the breasts had become soft. The rest of the case has no further special interest. I will only state that there was no heart affection, and that the fever, though very severe while it lasted, was of short duration, and the patient left the hospital quite well in fourteen days.

The second case that occurred to me was uncomplicated with any disease, and such as would usually fall under the care of the accoucheur rather than the physician.

A lady, the wife of a clergyman, was travelling with her husband, and, in order to accompany him, had weaned her baby (then seven months old). Happening to be at Oxford at the commemoration festival, he came to me in great trouble, telling me that his wife had done a foolish thing in weaning the child, and that they were now arrested in their progress in consequence of the state

of her breasts. They were tumid, very tender, painful, and hard, with large superficial veins, and the milk had been drawn with difficulty several times with temporary relief. I recommended the application of the extract of belladonna to the areolæ, desiring them to send for a medical practitioner if the inconvenience did not immediately subside or unless she felt quite well. A few days brought me a letter, giving a very satisfactory account, and thanking me for what she was pleased to call my wonderful prescription. Within two hours she was perfectly relieved, the milk absorbed, and (what is very important) there was no fever or other inconvenience attending the sudden suppression of the milk; and, instead of taking the opening medicine I had prescribed for her, she continued her journey the next morning.

I have not been able to discover that the fact that belladonna is available for the purpose of arresting the milk secretion is at all generally known—certainly it was not to several accoucheurs in large practice of whom I have inquired. The fact is important, if true, for then milk abscesses will become a matter of past history, and probably many diseases of the breast may be rendered less complicated by its use.

The two cases I have detailed are not sufficient to prove that it will always be either successful or safe, but they render it highly probable that it is so.

7. On Coniin. By Dr. Schreff.—Twenty-seven experiments were made with coniin upon the human subject, three medical gentlemen having each submitted to nine. The doses given varied from 0.003 grammes to 0.085 grammes. The last and strongest dose which was taken corresponded to two drops of newly-prepared coniin taken out of a bottle opened for the first time. Dr. Schreff has found, by observations on rabbits, that exposure to the air weakens the operation of the alkaloid. This dose was dissolved in thirty drops of alcohol. The following account of the symptoms produced embraces those which resulted from the operation of smaller quantities. A very sharp taste, strong burning in the mouth, sense of scraping in the throat, salivation; the epithelium of the tongue was removed in spots; the papillæ were strongly prominent, and the organ lost sensibility, and was as if paralyzed. In about three minutes, the head and face became very warm, accompanied by a sense of fullness, weight, and pressure in the head (symptoms which were not produced by the smaller doses). These head symptoms reached a high degree of intensity; became associated with giddiness, inability to think or to fix the attention on one subject, with sleepiness, great general discomfort, and malaise (*Katzenjammer*), which, in a less degree, lasted till next day. The vision was indistinct, objects floating together, and the pupil was dilated; the hearing was obtuse, as if the ears were stopped with cotton; the sense of touch was indistinct, and there was a feeling of formication, and as if the skin were covered with fur; general weakness and prostration, so that the head was with difficulty kept erect; the upper extremities could only be moved with the exertion of much effort; and, on account of the weakness of the lower extremities, the walk was very uncertain and tattering. Even the next day the weakness of the extremities continued, slight trembling being induced by much movement. While going home, the muscular dexterity was especially great, the walk consisting rather of a throwing forward of the body, so as to bring the muscular action into as little use as possible. On stepping, and, when at home, on pulling off the boots, cramps in the calves of the legs occurred, as well as in other groups of muscles when they were called into action—as, for instance, in the balls of the thumbs when the thumbs were closely bent. This symptom was constantly observed in two of the experimenters when the dose was at least one drop. Under strange effort to move, pain in the muscles and legs occurred. Fresh air diminished the giddiness and fullness in the head, but in one of the experimenters, occasioned temporary pain in the course of the supra-orbitalis and cutaneous motor nerves. Eructations, abdominal rumbling and distention, nausea, even efforts at vomiting, occurred in all the subjects, even after small doses; in one case, actual vomiting took place. Sometimes there was a tendency to diarrhoea. No effect was produced upon the urine. In all the cases there was dampness of the ends of the fingers; and after large doses, the hands were absolutely moist. The